

Attorney Docket No. AHUG.015
Serial No. R0671,141
Response to Office Action mailed 7/17/2006

A. AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for joining a ~~plurality of rod sections~~ first rod section and a second rod section together, comprising:

a ~~plug assembly~~ fixedly engaged to a first rod section proximate end and having a plug center spline, a plurality of ~~first~~ outer splines, a plurality of first conduits and a plurality of first connectors;

a ~~socket assembly~~ fixedly engaged to a second rod section distal end and having a ~~plurality of receptacles~~ socket receptacle, a plurality of socket receptacle splines, a plurality of second conduits, and a plurality of second connectors;

a securing device for securing the ~~plug assembly~~ to the ~~socket assembly~~;

wherein the ~~plug assembly~~ may be joined to the ~~socket assembly~~ by the securing device in a plurality of orientations so that, in each of the plurality of orientations, when the plurality of splines in the ~~plug assembly~~ mate with the plurality of ~~receptacles~~ in the ~~socket assembly~~, the plug mates with the socket plurality of first connectors engage the plurality of second connectors;

wherein a cavity created by the socket receptacle and the plurality of socket ~~receptacle~~ splines is shaped so that the plug center spline and the plurality of plug outer splines will intermesh with the socket receptacle and the socket receptacle splines when the plug and socket are plugged together;

wherein the plurality of plug outer splines and the plurality of socket receptacle splines are coaxially symmetric and have the same dimensions so that an alignment of

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the plurality of first connectors and the plurality of second connectors can be achieved in the plurality of orientations;

wherein the plug the center spline, the plurality of outer splines, and the plurality of first conduits are of unitary construction with each other; and

wherein the socket, the socket receptacle, the plurality of socket receptacle splines, and the plurality of second conduits are of unitary construction with each other.

2. Canceled.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the securing device is a coupling collar adapted for connecting it to the plug assembly and the socket assembly, the coupling collar initially engaged with the plug assembly.

4.-70. Claims 4 through 70 are canceled.